



<b>Course Title:</b>	<b>SW 732 001: Suicide Assessment and Prevention</b>
<b>Term:</b>	<b>Spring/Summer 2022</b>
<b>Course #/term:</b>	<b>SW732.001 SS 2022</b>
<b>Time and place:</b>	<b>Friday (6/24, 07/08, 07/15, 07/22, 07/29) from 6 PM to 9 PM</b>
<b>Credit hours:</b>	1
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	Foundation essentials or permission of instructor
<b>Instructor:</b>	Andrea L. Smith, MSW, She/her/hers
<b>Pronouns:</b>	<a href="mailto:alsmi@umich.edu">alsmi@umich.edu</a>
<b>Email:</b>	313-558-7976
<b>SSW Phone:</b>	
<b>Office:</b>	By appointment (email to arrange)
<b>Office Hours:</b>	

## **1. Course Statement**

---

### **a. Course description**

Suicide is a leading cause of preventable death in the United States. Suicide risk assessment, risk formulation, and treatment are consistently difficult in practice and greater attention to this public health issue and prevention efforts are needed, especially so, by social workers who provide the majority of mental health services in the U.S. This mini course is designed for MSW students who are focused on interpersonal practice and will cover the following topics: the critical issue of suicide (prevalence), suicide-risk assessment (risk and protective factors, warning signs, all components of the Columbia scale), risk formulation (determining next steps after assessment), and prevention approaches (multi-level prevention at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels). Students will have the opportunity to apply knowledge and practice skills with use of case studies, roleplays, and simulations.

### **b. Course objectives**

This 1-credit elective interpersonal practice course is intended to increase understandings of suicide and prepare social workers for practice with clients who may experience elevated risk for suicide. Specific objectives include increasing skills and confidence in suicide risk assessment, formulation of risk, and prevention-focused intervention approaches.

### **c. Course design**

Class format will include asynchronous (slides, pre-recorded lectures, practice with clinical cases, videos of treatment, and discussion posts) and synchronous (live lectures and discussion groups) activities. This course is designed to offer learning material via articles, videos, and live class time that will focus on practicing clinical skills, unpacking materials, and discussing the content.

Synchronous items involve live class and asynchronous items involve work on your own time. Asynchronous content is a foundation for the live class, so it must be viewed **prior** to each live class. This means Day 1 asynchronous material should be engaged with prior to the Day 1 live class; same for Day 2, etc.

### **d. Course focus on PODS**

Attention to Privilege, Oppression, Diversity, and Social Justice (PODS) is at the very core of social work education. When working with clients who may be at risk for suicide, it is of utmost importance that attention is placed not only on the client's presenting crisis (i.e., recent suicide ideation and/or attempt), but also contexts likely contributing to the presenting crisis which may include experiences related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and social injustice. As a result, an intensive focus on PODS is essential in suicide assessment and prevention, and this course will include a specific focus on culturally sensitive and anti-oppressive suicide assessment and prevention approaches.

## **2. Class Requirements**

---

### **a. Foundational clinical knowledge**

I will assume you have *foundational* knowledge in the following areas of interpersonal practice: engagement (e.g., active listening skills, building motivation for treatment, rapport strengthening), assessment (e.g., how to conduct a biopsychosocial assessment), and interventions (e.g., basics of what MI, CBT, and DBT are). Given the clinical background of students in this elective course may vary, and some may come from pathways other than IP, I will aim to keep our focus on the specific topics of the course. If you find that you are less familiar with some of the foundational knowledge components listed above, please let me know and I will do my best to provide resources outside of our live class time. My aim is to lay this content on top of your prior knowledge so when we talk about suicide assessment, for example, we are going to talk about how assessment is tailored

for a focus on suicide and not what an assessment is or how to do a biopsychosocial. Similar for interventions, when we discuss CBT (for example), we will learn tailoring for suicide prevention and not spend copious amounts of time on what CBT is and how it is delivered outside of suicide prevention. We will always have brief overviews as a first step but they are intended to be brief so we can dive into tailored application.

## **b. Text and class materials**

To fully engage in the course and develop skills focused on suicide assessment and prevention, it is expected that students will complete all required readings (will be referenced during class lectures and involved in class discussion questions).

I will post all articles in CANVAS under module 2 (day 2) and module 4 (day 4) of our course. In addition to the articles that will be provided in canvas (also shown below in the schedule), the following textbooks will be used.

Required readings (access will be available in CANVAS; under each module it will say what you have to read and the PDFs will be there!)

For Day/Class 2:

- Ruth, B. J., Gianino, M., Muroff, J., McLaughlin, D., & Feldman, B. N. (2012). You can't recover from suicide: Perspectives on suicide education in MSW programs. *Journal of Social Work Education, 48*(3), 501-516.
- Pisani, A. R., Murrie, D. C., & Silverman, M. M. (2016). Reformulating suicide risk formulation: From prediction to prevention. *Academic Psychiatry 40*(4), 623–629.
- Duarte-Vélez, Y., Vélez-Grau, C., & Álvarez, K. (2021). Psychosocial Treatments for Ethnoculturally Diverse Youth with Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviors. *Handbook of Youth Suicide Prevention, 315-347*.

For Day/Class 3:

- Conti, E. C., Jahn, D. R., Simons, K. V., Edinboro, L. P. C., Jacobs, M. L., Vinson, L., ... & Van Orden, K. A. (2020). Safety planning to manage suicide risk with older adults: case examples and recommendations. *Clinical gerontologist, 43*(1), 104-109.
- Michel, K. (2021). Suicide models and treatment models are separate entities. What does it mean for clinical suicide prevention?. *International journal of environmental research and public health, 18*(10), 5301.

For Day/Class 4:

- Hochhauser, S., Rao, S., England-Kennedy, E., & Roy, S. (2020). Why social justice matters: a context for suicide prevention efforts. *International journal for equity in health, 19*, 1-8.

Hofstra, E., Van Nieuwenhuizen, C., Bakker, M., Özgül, D., Elfeddali, I., de Jong, S. J., & van der Feltz-Cornelis, C. M. (2020). Effectiveness of suicide prevention interventions: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *General hospital psychiatry*, 63, 127-140.

- Standley, C. J. (2020). Expanding our paradigms: Intersectional and socioecological approaches to suicide prevention. *Death studies*, 1-9.

For Day/Class 5:

- Torok, M., Han, J., Baker, S., Werner-Seidler, A., Wong, I., Larsen, M. E., & Christensen, H. (2020). Suicide prevention using self-guided digital interventions: a systematic review and meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials. *The Lancet Digital Health*, 2(1), e25-e36.
- Calati, R., Courtet, P., & Lopez-Castroman, J. (2018). Refining suicide prevention: a narrative review on advances in psychotherapeutic tools. *Current psychiatry reports*, 20(2), 1-10.

**c. Class schedule**

Synchronous items involve live class and asynchronous items involve work on your own time. Asynchronous content is a foundation for the live class, so it must be viewed **prior** to each live class. This means Day 2 asynchronous material should be engaged with prior to the Day 2 live class; same for Day 4.

**Live class times are as follows (due to the amount of pre-recorded asynchronous materials, our class time will only be 1.5 hours in duration on each day):**

<b>Class/Day</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Modality</b>
Class 1: Friday 6/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview of Mental Health</li> <li>• What is mental illness?</li> <li>• What is a disorder?</li> <li>• How does mental illness impact me?</li> </ul>	Synchronous- noted as live in yellow- (live lectures and discussion groups) activities.
Class 2: Friday 7/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public health issue of suicide behavior in the US</li> <li>• Risk factors for suicide</li> <li>• Protective factors for suicide</li> <li>• Warning signs</li> <li>• Barriers to help-seeking</li> <li>• Stigma</li> <li>• Facilitators of help-seeking</li> <li>• Suicide risk assessment</li> <li>• Suicide risk formulation</li> </ul>	<p>Asynchronous (slides, pre-recorded lectures, practice with clinical cases, videos of treatment, and discussion posts)</p> <p>Synchronous- noted as live in yellow- (live lectures and discussion groups) activities.</p>

<p>Class 3: Friday 7/15</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to prevention approaches (live)</li> <li>• Gatekeeper training and screening</li> <li>• Safety planning</li> <li>• Practicing skills and clinical case in groups (live)</li> <li>• Discussion questions in groups (live)</li> </ul>	<p>Asynchronous (slides, pre-recorded lectures, practice with clinical cases, videos of treatment, and discussion posts)</p> <p>Synchronous- noted as live in yellow- (live lectures and discussion groups) activities.</p> <p>Note: there will be brief overviews of all pre-recorded topics in live class to make sure materials were understood</p>
<p>Class 4: Friday 7/22</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivational Interviewing (MI)</li> <li>• Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)</li> <li>• Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)</li> <li>• Lethal means restriction counseling</li> <li>• Postvention</li> </ul>	<p>Asynchronous (slides, pre-recorded lectures, practice with clinical cases, videos of treatment, and discussion posts)</p> <p>Synchronous- noted as live in yellow- (live lectures and discussion groups) activities.</p> <p>Note: there will be brief overviews of all pre-recorded topics in live class to make sure materials were understood</p>

<p>Class 5: Friday 7/29</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zero suicide</li> <li>• Cultural humility and anti-oppressive practice, tailoring for youth (live)</li> <li>• challenges in practice, provider support, resources</li> <li>• Practicing skills and clinical case in groups (live)</li> <li>• Discussion questions in groups (live)</li> </ul>	<p>Asynchronous (slides, pre-recorded lectures, practice with clinical cases, videos of treatment, and discussion posts)</p> <p>Synchronous- noted as live in yellow- (live lectures and discussion groups) activities.</p> <p>Note: there will be brief overviews of all pre-recorded topics in live class to make sure materials were understood</p>
---------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

**\*\*NOTE: ALL STUDENTS WILL BE NOTIFIED IF THERE ARE UNANTICIPATED SYLLABUS CHANGES VIA ANNOUNCEMENTS IN CANVAS\*\*\*\***

**d. Assignments**

Assignment/Task	Description	Due date	Required for Satisfactory Grade
Attendance and participation	Attendance and participation in each session	Ongoing	Yes
Discussion post introduction #1	Post an introduction of yourself in Canvas. Who are you? What inspired you to take this course?	6/24 by 11:59 PM in Canvas	Yes
Discussion post reflection #1	Post from Day/Class 2 clinical case due by 7/7 (due in discussion section)	7/7 by 11:59 PM in Canvas	Yes
Discussion post reflection #2	Post from Day/Class 3 clinical case due by 7/14	7/14 by 11:59 PM in Canvas	Yes
	(due in discussion section)		

SIMmersion #1	Suicide Assessment with Taye	7/14 by 11:59 PM in Canvas	Yes
SIMmersion #2	Safety Planning with Henry	7/21 by 11:59 PM in Canvas	Yes
SIMmersion #3	Motivating to treatment with Katrina	7/28 by 11:59 PM in Canvas	Yes

All assignment descriptions will be posted on the CANVAS site with their due dates.

Assignment Overviews (greater detail in the assignments section of CANVAS):

1. **Participation and attendance:** Read below in *section e*, attendance, and class participation.
2. **SIMmersion:** Virtual work with 3 of the SIMmersion clients (Suicide Assessment with Taye, Safety Planning with Henry, and Motivating to Treatment with Katrina). The goal is to get a high score, with a cutoff of 75% or better being required in each 15-20 min conversation. You must practice with both clients at least 3 times but can attempt as many times as needed to achieve the score. You will submit the screenshot of a score of 75% or better through CANVAS as your assignment submission (upload a screen shot of your performance report score into the assignment section). Higher scores are encouraged- 75% is just the 'bottom score that gets credit.'"
3. **Discussion post reflections:** Two discussion post responses are due in CANVAS and will be listed as post from Day/Class 1 and Day/Class 2. These posts are visible to the full class and will allow for group processing and learning along with others.

Assignment Guidelines: All assignments and papers to be handed-in are due by 11:59 PM (Eastern Standard Time) on the dates posted in the syllabus and in CANVAS. Late assignments will result in an automatic reduction of points (1 point will be deducted every 48 hours after the due date/time). Assignments more than 5 days late will not be accepted.

For all assignments you will be graded on:

- Meeting assignment parameters (we will review parameters for each assignment ahead of time)
- Good writing skills: clarity of thought, organization, and flow (**see next section**)
- Effort/ability to self-reflect and think critically
- Demonstration of social work values (empathy, strengths-based thinking, and



- client dignity)
- Insightfulness and clinical judgment
- Integration of reading materials
- Ability to discern which aspects of use of self would be important in assessment or intervention

Writing skills: Papers and assignments are expected to be well organized, clearly written, and show minimal grammatical errors. In this and most of your classes you will be asked to demonstrate grammar, spelling, and professional writing. Please be aware that there will be a reduction of points for poor writing skills (including grammatical errors). Please use the Sweetland Writing Center if you require writing assistance.

#### **e. Attendance and Class Participation**

It is important that you attend each class session, engage in discussions and clinical practice with other students, and submit all assignments in CANVAS.

Missing one or both of our in-person classes, in part or in total for any reason, will result in an automatic grade reduction. ***Email me if a conflict arises.***

#### **f. Grading**

The course is graded as S (Satisfactory) or U(Unsatisfactory). Late assignments will not be accepted and will impact points/grading, unless arranged in advance. Please email the instructor regarding any lateness. Be mindful that attendance in the live classes and participation are important for a satisfactory grade.

Additional information can be found in the MSW Student Guide for policies on [Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction](#) as well as [Student Grievance procedures](#) and the [policy for grading in special circumstances](#).

#### **g. Class Recording and Course Materials**

Audio and video recording of in-class lectures and discussions is prohibited without the advance written permission of the instructor. Students with an approved accommodation from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities permitting the recording of class meetings must present documentation to the instructor in advance of any recording being done. The instructor reserves the right to disallow recording for a portion of any class time where privacy is a special concern. If the instructor chooses to record a class, they will decide which classes, if any, are recorded, what portion of each class is recorded, and whether a recording is made available on the course management website. On days when classes are recorded, students will be notified a recording is occurring. Class recordings and course materials may not be reproduced, sold, published or distributed to others, in whole or in part, without the written consent of the instructor.

## **h. Covid-19 Statement**

For the safety of all students, faculty, and staff on campus, it is important for each of us to be mindful of safety measures that have been put in place for our protection. By returning to campus, you have acknowledged your responsibility for protecting the collective health of our community. Your participation in this course on an in-person/hybrid basis is conditional upon your adherence to all safety measures mandated by the state of Michigan and the University, including maintaining physical distance of six feet from others, and properly wearing a face covering in class. Other applicable safety measures may be described in the [Wolverine Culture of Care](#) and the [University's Face Covering Policy for COVID-19](#). Your ability to participate in this course in-person/hybrid may be impacted by failure to comply with campus safety measures. Individuals seeking to request an accommodation related to the face covering requirement under the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the [Office for Institutional Equity](#). If you are unable or unwilling to adhere to these safety measures while in a face-to-face class setting, you will be required to participate on a remote basis. I also encourage you to review the [Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) and the [COVID-related Addendum to the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#).

## **i. Health-Related Class Absences**

Please evaluate your own health status regularly and refrain from attending class and coming to campus if you are ill. You are encouraged to seek appropriate medical attention for treatment. School of Social Work students who miss class due to illness of any kind will be given opportunities to access course materials online or provided with alternative learning opportunities. Please notify me by email about your absence as soon as practical, so that I can make accommodations. Please note that documentation (a doctor's note) for medical excuses is *not* required.

Additional School and University policies, information and resources are available here: <https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources>. They include:

- *Safety and emergency preparedness*
- *Mental health and well-being*
- *Teaching evaluations*
- *Proper use of names and pronouns*
- *Accommodations for students with disabilities*
- *Religious/spiritual observances*
- *Military deployment*
- *Writing skills and expectations*
- *Academic integrity and plagiarism*